



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Hamilton:

In response to the letter of July 17 from Mr. Berry of your staff, I am forwarding a copy of a review which Mr. Maertens of the State Department has done of Shootdown, by R.W. Johnson, on KAL 007. The review will appear shortly in the International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence.

As the review points out, the allegations of US involvement in the shootdown or of negligence in failing to warn the aircraft are in error. It is unfortunate that a handful of uninformed individuals continue to put forward such assertions which inevitably raise doubts in the minds of family members about how the aircraft deviated so far off course. Since the answer to that question can never be known with any assurance, some will find persuasive the suggestion that intelligence activity on behalf of the US Government was the cause. As your Committee has itself determined, the US Government had no role whatever in the tragedy of KAL 007, passive or active.

The Administration had hoped that an international investigation by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a technical body of the UN, would receive the cooperation of the Soviet Government. It was for that reason that we supported an inquiry by ICAO rather than the US Government. The ICAO investigation offers the best explanation to date as to why the aircraft went off course. ICAO concluded that the deviation was probably the result of flight crew error, but the errors were not of a kind unknown in civil aviation. Given the fact that the "black box" was never located and the flight crew perished, we doubt that any other organization would be able to determine with any more certainty why the aircraft went off course.

For that reason, statements by US Government officials on the subject of KAL 007, while they represent informed views, are not necessarily official, since they are not repeating the conclusions of an official investigation by

The honorable  
Lee H. Hamilton,  
House of Representatives.

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the Administration. With those comments in mind, I am sure that you will find Mr. Maertens' review on the subject of KAL 007 to be interesting and useful to members receiving inquiries on this subject.

If we can be of assistance to you with this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



J. Edward Fox  
Assistant Secretary  
Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs

Enclosures:

Correspondence returned.  
KAL Article.

LOUIS STOKES, OHIO  
 DAVE MCCURDY, OKLAHOMA  
 ANTHONY C. BEILSON, CALIFORNIA  
 ROBERT W. KASTENMEIER, WISCONSIN  
 DAN DANIEL, VIRGINIA  
 ROBERT A. ROE, NEW JERSEY  
 GEORGE E. BROWN, JR., CALIFORNIA  
 MATTHEW F. MCHUGH, NEW YORK  
 BERNARD J. DWYER, NEW JERSEY

BOB STUMP, ARIZONA  
 ANDY IRELAND, FLORIDA  
 HENRY J. HYDE, ILLINOIS  
 DICK CHENEY, WYOMING  
 BOB LIVINGSTON, LOUISIANA  
 BOB McEWEN, OHIO

THOMAS K. LATIMER, STAFF DIRECTOR  
 MICHAEL J. O'NEIL, CHIEF COUNSEL  
 STEVEN K. BERRY, ASSOCIATE COUNSEL

# U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE  
 ON INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

July 17, 1986

47

**ACTION**  
 is assigned to



Mr. Thomas R. Maertens  
 Department of State  
 2201 C Street, N.W.  
 Washington, D. C. 20520

Dear Mr. Maertens:

I am writing to follow up on our conversation of several days ago concerning the KAL 007. As we discussed, several Members of the Intelligence Committee have received correspondence from immediate family members or relatives of those passengers aboard the KAL 007 flight that was shot down by the Soviets on September 1, 1983. The correspondence received by Members expressed the common frustration over a complete and satisfactory explanation as to exactly why the KAL 007 aircraft was so far off its original intended course. However, the more disturbing issue common to the correspondence being received is that many believe that the official government statements of denial of any complicity in the KAL 007 incident are untrue.

As you aware, the Committee reviewed the information surrounding this incident with great care and has found that the U.S. Government statements denying complicity in this incident are accurate and leave out no relevant details.

I do not know if the most recent correspondence has been spurred by the renewed attention focused on the new book entitled Shootdown on the KAL 007 flight or the various magazine and newspaper articles which appear from time to time. However, I am enclosing a representative sample of the correspondence received by Members of the Committee and request your review. I know the Members would greatly appreciate receiving your response to the allegations that the United States Government has been uncooperative. Furthermore, I would appreciate receiving any additional information that you wish to share with the Members of the Committee. I look forward to your early response.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours,

*Steven K. Berry*  
 Steven K. Berry  
 Associate Counsel

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 OUT  
 Enclosures

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U.S. DEPT. OF STATE

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Congressman Dick Cheney  
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence  
E-405 Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20515

STAT

June 25, 1986

Dear Congressman Cheney ;

My wife of nine months, [REDACTED] was a passenger aboard the doomed KAL007 flight that was shot down by the Soviets on September 1, 1983. I consider the shootdown of a civilian airliner an abominable and unpardonable act of aggression by the Soviet Union. My wife's tragic death continues to be emotionally distressing to me and my family not to mention [REDACTED] mother, father and sister in Japan. In addition, I feel that [REDACTED] death precipitated my mother's death on what would have been our first wedding anniversary on January 1, 1984.

The facts are quite clear that the Soviets did indeed shoot the aircraft down after it flew over Russian airspace; however, there has never, as far as I am concerned, been a satisfactory explanation as to exactly why the aircraft was so far off course to begin with. Indeed, the more I look into the situation, the official account of the incident becomes less and less believable and more and more contradictory.

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As a next of kin and as an American citizen, I have the right to a forthright exposition of the known facts. I am convinced that the only way to get at the known facts at this point is through a thorough congressional investigation. I am aware that information stemming from private investigations of the KAL007 shootdown has been sent to [REDACTED]. Since our government has provided so few facts and has cooperated so little, it only causes me to speculate whether the life of my wife [REDACTED] was needlessly and perhaps criminally endangered.

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Being an American citizen, I expect my government to be open and accountable for any action it takes. It is my patriotic duty to bring the truth in this matter to light. I know that it would take great political courage to challenge the Executive branch of our government in this matter; however, the function of Congress is to keep the Executive branch of the government in check and to represent citizens like myself who have legitimate grievances.

In conclusion, I request that the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence conduct a complete, in depth investigation. I would like a reply to my request and sincerely hope that you will indeed initiate a complete investigation of the facts. My request, though difficult, is a vitally important exercise in our democratic system.

I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

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[REDACTED]

cc: Members of the Public Works and Transportation Committee and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, the U.S. House of Representatives.

June 18, 1986

The Honorable Dick Cheney  
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence  
H-405 Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cheney:

We are the daughters of [REDACTED] who, with our step-mother, [REDACTED], was aboard Korean Airlines Flight 007, shot down by a Russian fighter pilot on September 1st, 1983. Almost three years have passed since then, yet we have never received a satisfactory explanation for what happened.

The United States Government's official account of the incident asserts that the plane strayed off course into Soviet territory unintentionally. However, the large amount of information amassed since the tragedy casts doubt upon this scenario and raises serious questions as to our Government's role in this affair.

As next-of-kin, we have a right to a more credible explanation as to how the plane that carried our father and step-mother to their deaths came to be in Soviet airspace. The shocking nature of their deaths, the suddenness of the loss, and the grief and pain are with us still, but the mounting evidence as to the possible complicity of our own Government has fueled the anger that compels us to speak out now. We are aware that much of this evidence has been sent to Chairman Hamilton.

If, as the evidence suggests, our relatives, civilian air passengers, were forced to become unsuspecting participants in a dangerous espionage mission, then we must conclude that their most fundamental civil rights were monstrously violated.

The essence of American democracy is the upholding of the constitutional rights of the individual, and one of its most basic precepts is to assure that those we elect to office be held accountable for their actions.

Justice must be served. It is the duty of Congress to conduct a thorough investigation of the KAL incident. Armed with its subpoena power, and the right to examine classified

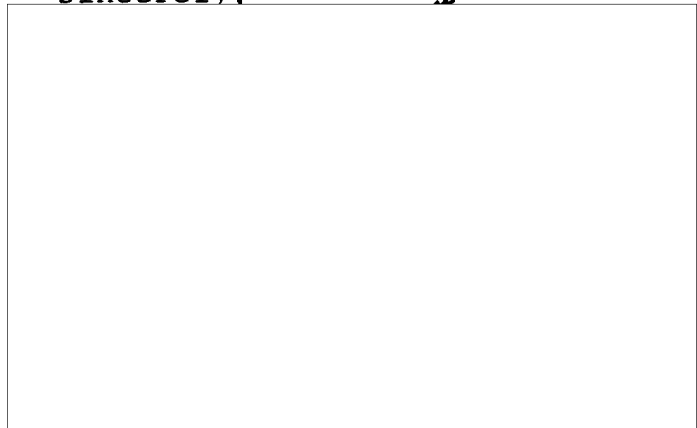
material, Congress can uncover the truth and force those involved to answer for their actions.

We are personally calling upon you to defend the democratic ideals that this nation was built upon and in which we have always believed. We are asking you to familiarize yourself with the material submitted to the Committee by [redacted] Investigator for the Fund for Constitutional Government, as it contains facts which have disturbing implications. We have written to the other members of the Committee and we hope that action will be taken soon.

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We look forward to hearing from you regarding this matter.

Sincerely,



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Shootdown by R.W. Johnson

reviewed by Thomas R. Maertens

On September 1, 1983, the Soviet Union shot down a Korean airliner, Flight 007, over the Sea of Japan, killing 269 passengers and crew. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a technical body of the United Nations, investigated the circumstances of the aircraft's deviation from course and into Soviet airspace. It concluded that the crew of 007 was not aware of the flight's deviation nor of Soviet efforts to intercept it. Because the crew members died in the shootdown and the flight recorders were never recovered, the investigation was unable to determine the reason for the deviation. It nonetheless postulated that navigational errors by the crew were responsible and offered a number of hypotheses to account for the error.

The Air Navigation Commission (ANC), a technical subgroup of ICAO, reviewed the ICAO report and confirmed that there was no evidence that the flight crew was aware it was off course, but it found flaws in all of the scenarios postulated to account for the deviation. It offered the opinion, however, that an extensive evaluation of inertial navigation system (INS) equipment malfunctions should be pursued since this had accounted for significant track deviations in the past.

Following these two reports, the ICAO Council voted overwhelmingly in March 1984, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia opposing, to condemn the use of force against the airliner. The Council resolution also deeply deplored the Soviet failure to cooperate in the international search and rescue effort and its failure to cooperate with the ICAO investigation team.

R.W.Johnson, a fellow in politics at Oxford, will have none of this. As implied in the subtitle of his book, Flight 007 and the American Connection, Johnson thinks the aircraft was on an intelligence mission for the US Government. While rather circumspect in stating this conclusion, there is no doubt that this is his view.

The mission, Johnson believes, was to test the Soviet radar network. This would permit the US to determine whether the new Soviet radar under construction near Krasnoyarsk was intended to fill any gaps in their early warning system. "007's flight path would have been perfectly on track" to reveal such a gap, says Johnson. To illustrate this assertion he uses a map by Philip Klass from Aviation Week and Space Technology dated August 22, 1983. Klass has stated publicly that he obtained the information on that map, including the gaps shown in the

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Soviet radar network, from a high US intelligence official three weeks before the shootdown. Johnson, nonetheless, claims that such gaps were only noted after the event.

This is only the beginning of problems with Johnson's theory. The Krasnoyarsk radar is located in Central Asia, thousands of miles from the Soviet coast and even farther from the point of closest approach of 007. There is no radar of any kind, Soviet or American, which can track an aircraft at that range. The very fact that the radar was situated thousands of miles inland (putting a US radar in Kansas would be roughly comparable) should have struck Johnson as inconsistent with an aircraft early warning mission.

Johnson clearly believes, moreover, that a radar is only "triggered" by the approach of an aircraft, which is why he thinks such a mission would have been necessary. This is simply wrong. Inherent in the very mission of early warning radars, detecting approaching aircraft, is that they operate at all times. He apparently believes as well that the Korean airliner must have triggered a number of military radars which the Soviets were attempting to keep secret from US intelligence. He never attempts to explain why the Soviets would need to use special military radars to track a 747, with its immense radar cross section, rather than conventional air traffic radars, however. Moreover, a military aircraft or an unmanned drone could have performed such a mission without the risks to human life and the hazards of potential exposure entailed in Johnson's scheme. I can state from first hand experience that such drones were used in Southeast Asia. Once used successfully, such practices are long remembered in the intelligence and military communities.

Equally implausible, the Korean airliner flew inside Soviet airspace for two and a half hours. Even a brief intrusion into Soviet airspace would seemingly have accomplished Johnson's mission; two and a half hours would be simply suicidal. Such a suicide mission, on the other hand, would not be inconsistent with the planned atrocity theory postulated in Johnson's December 1983 article in the Guardian. It contained the startling revelation that Koreans are such fanatical anti-communists that no sacrifice, including their own lives, would be too great for the cause.

Finally, Johnson is apparently unaware that it is not necessary to intercept a radar's transmissions to determine its coverage. Knowing its type, location and orientation are sufficient. As Philip Klass attests, the US had such information on the Krasnoyarsk radar before the KAL flight, though the radar still is not operational in 1986. So the intelligence mission which Johnson alleges for 007's flight turns out for various reasons to be technically impossible,



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implausible and unnecessary.

Johnson is determined not to let facts or logic get in the way of his theory, however. It seems self apparent that if there were some reason to use a civilian airliner for an intelligence mission, it would require that the airliner be identified and treated as such: forced down for inspection, such as the Seaboard World airliner in 1968, rather than shot down. To ensure that result, the pilot would do nothing aggressive or unusual and would strictly comply with normal aviation practices and Soviet interception signals. Yet Johnson apparently believes the Korean airliner turned off his lights; changed altitude and speed unpredictably; transmitted deceptive radio messages; ignored interception signals and took evasive maneuvers to escape the interceptor. By this account, which is essentially the Soviet spy plane story, 007 was trying to arouse Russian suspicions. (All of the foregoing are refuted in one way or another by the ICAO and ANC reports. See also my article "Tragedy of Errors" in the September 1985 Foreign Service Journal.)

Even more unlikely, Johnson alleges that 007 was shadowed by "a whole fleet of [electronic warfare and intelligence] platforms," one of whose jobs was to jam coastal radars. According to Johnson's earlier article, jamming would cause an aircraft to "blip on and off" Soviet radar screens. In reality, of course, jamming would cause the Soviet radar screens to go white, immediate proof that 007 had some sinister purpose. This misunderstanding makes the espionage scenario he paints in Shootdown appear ludicrous. Johnson thinks that jamming would have made 007 invisible to the Soviets' coastal radars and so they would have "steel[ed] themselves to switch on hitherto secret radars." Presto, the Krasnoyarsk gap. Johnson never explains why jamming would not also affect the secret radars, or how the Soviets would even know when to turn them on, but then little else about his story is internally consistent either.

In addition to the fleet of EW/ELINT "planes, ships, satellite, and perhaps even the shuttle," which he asserts were part of the mission, Johnson has written that 007, upon leaving Soviet airspace, "no doubt, [would] be greeted by protective swarms of US fighters." What Johnson has really described is a major military mission using a civilian airliner. What such activity really would do is to tip the Soviets off that this was a spy mission without being able to protect the airliner when it was really in danger--over Soviet territory. Knowledge of the above activity, Johnson thinks, would have been extremely tightly held to "maybe a hundred" people, including the six "deadheading" (non-working) crewmen whom Johnson hints were aboard 007 for contingency purposes. A major operation involving three countries (the Japanese and Koreans would have

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to have been in on it) large fleets of planes and ships, several intelligence organizations, the White House, State and the Pentagon, and Johnson thinks that "maybe a hundred" people were involved.

Equally silly is Johnson's allegation that the airliner took evasive action. According to Captain Harold Ewing, a 747 pilot, the very concept of a 747 evading a supersonic interceptor for all but the briefest moment is absurd. An Su-15, the aircraft which shot 007 down, can fly more than twice the speed of sound. Without even considering the interceptor's advantages in turn radius, rate of climb and other performance characteristics, the speed difference alone would make escape impossible. Whatever maneuver a subsonic 747 attempted, the interceptor could simply circle around for another attack in a matter of seconds. The Korean pilot, a former fighter pilot himself, would know this beyond the shadow of a doubt. Johnson, nonetheless, asserts (p. 26) that 007 attempted evasive maneuvers, "the standard fighter tactic in aerial combat of feinting a climb and diving instead."

Johnson even goes so far as to claim that the airliner left 1800 pounds of paying cargo behind in Anchorage and implies that this was so the aircraft would be lighter and more maneuverable, the better to escape interceptors. The absurdity of this statement can hardly be surpassed. Full or empty, a 747 will begin coming apart before it passes Mach 1.

His facts about the "cargo" are wrong as well. The Flight Release Sheet for the aircraft does indeed show 1200 (not 1800) pounds of Payload crossed out, but the same figure is then entered four lines down. Next to it is the notation "2/4 DH" which corresponds neatly to the six "deadheading" crewmen on the plane at 200 pounds apiece, possibly two assigned to jumpseats in the cockpit and four in the passenger compartment.

It is instructive also to note Johnson's example of an evasive maneuver. He claims the 747 made a 3,000 foot descent over a three minute period, a thousand feet per minute in other words, which he labels a "dive." The normal idle-power descent rate of a 747 from such altitude, according to FAA technicians, is three or four times faster than that, and can be as high as six thousand feet per minute. It is hard to believe that any interceptor pilot would be fooled by such an "evasive maneuver."

It seems very unlikely, moreover, that the descent even took place. The sequence of events is this: 007 requested clearance to climb to 35,000 feet at 1815:10; Tokyo approved the request exactly five minutes later; 007 reported he was beginning to climb at 1820:20; the Su-15 fired cannons 29 seconds later, and reported at 1822:02 that "the target is

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decreasing speed." There is no assertion by the interceptor that the decrease in speed was rapid or marked. The most likely explanation, therefore, is that the decrease in speed was caused by the climb.

What makes the evasive descent even more implausible is the fact that the interceptor was actually some six thousand feet below the 747 at this point. Far from evading it, the 747 would have been dropping down into the interceptor's sights.

Japanese radar at one point does show the airliner 4,000 feet below the altitude he reported, but this could be accounted for by the general inaccuracy of height-finding radars at the extreme ranges in question. The error could be plus or minus 6,000 feet or more, too great to place much reliance on the data.

The problem here is that the blind are leading the blind. Johnson derives the evasive maneuver story (and much else in this book) from David Pearson, a graduate student in sociology who has written two articles on 007 for The Nation, assisted by John Keppel. Johnson, like Pearson and Keppel, had no previous experience in writing on aviation matters before he became interested ("obsessed," he has said) in the KAL-007 case. Under those circumstances, common sense dictates that someone with technical expertise be asked to review one's writings. It is clear Johnson did not--or else ignored the advice.

In consequence, Johnson's writing, like Pearson's, is a technical hash. This judgment is not based solely on my own expertise; I also received technical comments from three experts in the field. They are Philip J. Klass, an editor/writer for Aviation Week and Space Technology for more than thirty years; Captain Harold Ewing, a 747 pilot who regularly flies the North Pacific, and has studied the KAL shootdown extensively; and James Oberg, a space flight engineer and science writer. Klass and Oberg are both cited in Johnson's book. It was Ewing who persuaded ICAO to check into the allegation that 007 loaded 10,000 pounds of "extra fuel." (By adding 007's fuel remainder to the actual fuel loaded in Anchorage, as evidenced by the fuel tickets, it was determined that no extra fuel was loaded, which Johnson mistakenly thinks would "allow the plane to use every ounce of speed in the later stages of the flight.")

Tabulating their comments with mine, I counted 105 factual or technical errors, and almost as many unsupported assertions, JUST IN THE FIRST CHAPTER--and there are twelve more chapters. It is my estimate, and the others agree, that Shootdown contains hundreds and hundreds of factual errors. Nor do the errors appear to be random, some tending to support and some to dispute Johnson's thesis: they are all in one direction, all tending to make the ordinary appear sinister. Johnson claims, for example, that the Anchorage radio beacon was shut down just an hour before 007 took off.

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The ICAO report clearly states that the beacon was down from August 23 to September 2 and a Notice to Airmen was issued. He misrepresents the Air Navigation Commission report to suit his purposes as well, claiming the ANC report had suggested that the question of whether the deviation might have been deliberate should be pursued. What the report really suggested was that INS malfunctions should be investigated, as I mentioned in paragraph 2, above. It is for reasons like these that James Oberg has termed Johnson's book the greatest literary fraud since the "Hitler Diaries."

According to Johnson, the KAL shootdown was the result of a new Cold War which he attributes to the Reagan Administration's militaristic policies toward the Soviet Union. He points to US military exercises and installations in the Pacific and Indian oceans, including Diego Garcia, which "ring" (sic) the Soviet Far East, and claims, for example, that US Navy exercises in the North Pacific that summer were "dress rehearsals in force for a major strike and invasion of the Soviet Far East." This was the cause of the tension in the area, which in turn led to the shootdown, he says. If Johnson believes that the US is making contingency plans to invade Kamchatka, then there are obviously very few limits on what he won't believe about Ronald Reagan.

Absent from Johnson's calculations is the effect of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan ("incursion" Johnson calls it), and the Soviet role in the imposition of marital law in Poland. But then Johnson attributes the worsened relations after the shootdown to Reagan, too. "There was no doubt that the Reagan Administration's handling of the (007) crisis had created a new low in Soviet-American relations." So it was not the shootdown but the reaction that was to blame. This is true only in the same limited sense that it is true there would be no fighting in Afghanistan but for the Mujahiddin's reaction to the Soviet invasion. The Soviet military wants after all not to fight but to control the country.

An essential part of all the conspiracy theorists' stories about 007 is one or more "fallback" positions. If the US did not actively promote the intrusion by 007, at a minimum, it observed the incursion and failed to warn the aircraft, Johnson claims, in order to observe Soviet reactions. To support this claim, the conspiracy school has developed a standard litany of real and imagined intelligence assets which it asserts were watching and relaying the information about this one stray aircraft immediately to Ronald Reagan. Johnson repeats the story in toto.

Included among these assets, says Johnson, is the Cobra Talon radar, which he places on Shemya Island in the Aleutians, "a powerful Over-the Horizon (OTH) Backscatter radar....In the

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case of 007, there is no doubt that Cobra Talon would have been able to follow the plane almost throughout its whole flight and certainly at the time of the shoot-down." (p. 81)

It is typical of Johnson's book that he introduces egregious nonsense with the assertion "there is no doubt," concludes with a "certainly" and fails to provide a footnote. Cobra Talon is indeed the code name of a radar, but it was previously located in Southeast Asia, never in Alaska; it was dismantled several years before the KAL shootdown and remains in storage today; and it was not an OTH radar, a category of radars usually given magical properties by conspiracy buffs. (The only US OTH radar is in Moscow, Maine. No OTH radar could have followed 007 "almost throughout its whole flight" even were there such a radar in the vicinity. The minimum range of an OTH radar is about 500 miles and its maximum is about 1800 miles, a tracking envelope of some 1300 miles; 007's projected flight path was in excess of 3,500 miles. Furthermore, Shemya Island could not hold an OTH radar, since it has neither the geographical barrier nor the needed size, several dozen miles, to prevent leakage directly from the transmit into the receive antennas.

Most of the other claims Johnson makes about US radars are wrong as well. He overstates the real range of air defense radars in Alaska and at Misawa, Japan, by a factor of two to three; asserts that Cobra Dane and Cobra Judy (phased array radars) must have tracked 007, when in fact they do not track aircraft at all; and claims there were US military radars at St. Paul's Island and at Wakkanai, Japan, and "several giant US radars in Japan," none of which exist.

Most of this is simply repeated from other conspiracy buffs without attribution. It seems to be a central tenet of that group that no assertion which fits a sinister reading of US actions or intentions need be verified. An example is Johnson's assertion that US law requires that the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigate the shootdown. He claims the NTSB did open such an investigation but was summarily and illegally ordered to stop by the State Department which "confiscated" all its documentation.

Philip Klass inquired of the NTSB whether such allegations were true. He received a letter from the Acting Chairman, Patricia Goldman, stating the US had a right as the State of Manufacture of the aircraft to name a representative to the investigation, and did so. At no time was the NTSB ordered or advised not to participate in the investigation, she wrote. Once it was determined that the airplane's loss was due to hostile action, however, which is not within the Safety Board's mandate, the investigation was taken over by ICAO, and US interests were represented by the FAA.

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This and a number of his other assertions could have been easily verified with a phone call or a letter. That Johnson did not do so points up that this book is essentially a repetition of assertions made elsewhere, not an investigation. If he had checked out too many facts, of course, his spy plane story would have completely evaporated since it is based on misinformation and unsupported assertion. The irony of Johnson's assertions about the NTSB is that, had the Board conducted the investigation, Johnson would very likely have dismissed the results as part of a cover-up. It was just to avoid such a possibility that the US originally decided to seek an international investigation. It was thought, moreover, that the Soviet Union might be more cooperative with such an investigation than with a US inquiry. As the ICAO Council Resolution demonstrates, they were not, however.

On the question of an investigation, Johnson makes the observation that "most of the governments concerned have failed to institute a thorough, convincing and detailed inquiry into the tragedy. To date, only the USSR has carried out an investigation on its own: the US, the South Koreans and the Japanese have not." In the first place, the South Korean investigation report was appended to the ICAO, just as was the Soviet one, and it was more detailed. To imply that a 17-page report attempting to justify Soviet actions was "thorough, convincing and detailed," while at the same time faulting the ICAO report demonstrates persuasively Johnson's ideological biases. Can Johnson seriously believe there is some independent body in the USSR which could issue an investigation report inimical to State interests? He demonstrates this bias further by his reference to the Soviet September 9 spy plane story, for example, as a "mature" assessment, despite all the changes and contradictions which preceded and followed it, and he practically apologizes for the obvious technical errors which Soviet Marshall Kirsanov made three weeks after the event. At several points in the book, Johnson claims that the Soviets have no reason to lie about this or that point. The outcry following the shootdown gave them every reason to shift the blame however they could.

Johnson's account of the search for the black box is also misleading. He implies, through 20 pages of speculation and innuendo, that the US secretly found the box. What he fails to note, though it was stated in the ICAO report, is that an ICAO observer was present with the search party to take charge of the black box. More important, the black box is apparently in Soviet territorial waters. The US twice requested permission to search there and was turned down by the Soviet Union. As to the conflicting reports on the location of the black box at the time, the search and recovery group suspected, but could not prove, that the Soviet Union had put a false pinger into the

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water to mislead them. Neither it nor the black box was ever recovered, however. What is certain is that the Soviet Union made a serious effort to impede US and Japanese recovery of the black box, which Johnson attributes to "sheer frustration." Those efforts included cutting mooring cables, pointing guns at Japanese fishermen and dredging the sea bottom.

Even where Johnson gives a footnote or reference, his use of sources simply cannot be trusted. On page 17, he refers to two interviews the Soviet interceptor pilot gave. In the first, on Soviet television September 10, the pilot claimed that he made several attempts to signal 007, all with no response, says Johnson. What the pilot really said was: "But he continued to fly on the same course and at the same height." Three days later, the same pilot asserted in Red Star that 007 attempted to take evasive action: "He began wildly varying his course, altitude and speed." The first statement obviously contradicts Johnson's evasive maneuver story. Johnson's solution was to mischaracterize the first statement, and quote only the second.

Johnson uses this type of misleading pseudo-scholarship literally dozens of times in his book, along with an incessant and annoying innuendo. The Korean pilots do not give "wrong" or "mistaken" position reports, as a lost aircraft might do; they give "false" ones. A common variation on this is to preface an assertion with a misleading adverb, such as "oddly, ..." when Johnson is about to misrepresent some aspect of the shootdown. Such misuse of language is consistent with his earlier allegation that an editor of Defense Science magazine had "admitted" that Korean airliners regularly overfly Soviet airspace. Now a journalist can claim, allege, state, assert, and so forth with respect to the actions of a third party. He can only "admit" with respect to his own actions. Second, the individual was later determined to be not an editor of Defense Science, but a writer for Penthouse magazine. Third, the ICAO found no evidence that KAL had routinely taken short cuts across Soviet territory. Had they done so, both the Soviets and Japanese would have seen them on radar and taken measures, of one kind or another, to stop them.

Johnson's footnoting, though extensive, is misleading in other ways as well. He uses the New York Times as a reference 185 times, and the Washington Post 123 times. Presumably, then, the Times and the Post subscribe to his spy plane story. An October 28, 1984, story by Philip Taubman in the New York Times quotes Bill Kovach, the Washington editor of the Times as saying that he assigned six reporters to the story when it broke and two to review the evidence when the Nation published its charges. They found no evidence to support any of those assertions, Kovach said. Post managing editor Leonard Downie is quoted in the same story as saying that the Post

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investigated the 007 story "to within an inch of its life," and the spy plane stories didn't check out.

The above article was, inexplicably, not among Johnson's 185 references to the New York Times. Missing among Johnson's 123 references to the Washington Post is an October 27, 1983, account by Fred Hiatt of Soviet efforts to interfere in the black box recovery.

Even when Johnson's account of a newspaper article is more or less accurate, his quotes are very selective. In citing a September 26, 1983, New York Times article to support one of his contentions, Johnson fails to mention that the author also reported that a consensus of current and former intelligence officials was that the aircraft was not on an intelligence mission; that (contrary to Johnson's theory) such a flight could add little or nothing to our knowledge of Soviet radars; and, that congressional committees had begun full-scale inquiries.

Among the congressional committees were the intelligence committees of both the House and the Senate. The Senate intelligence committee concluded there was "no direct or indirect involvement by the U.S. Intelligence Community. The House intelligence committee determined that "U.S. Intelligence did not promote or even passively subscribe to an overflight." It also refuted in detail David Pearson's story in the Nation, the basis for much of Johnson's speculation.

Subsequent to Johnson's book, a U.S. federal judge, in dismissing a negligence suit against the US Government, wrote that "The record is clear that the government breached no duty to the passengers of KAL 007." Adding to this the conclusion by ICAO--that it found no evidence of any deliberateness in the airliner's deviation--makes a rather persuasive case that Mr. Johnson doesn't begin to refute.

The central point that most adherents to the spy plane theory cite is their belief that a civil airliner cannot go off course 300 miles by accident. Most people who make such assertions are laymen such as Johnson who think this has never happened in the past, except for the "other" KAL plane in 1978, which went off course almost a thousand miles. They frequently cite US domestic statistics as evidence, and then attempt to extrapolate probability for the 007 case from those. But there is a vast difference between the North Pacific routes, which had some 2200 miles without radar coverage, and US domestic airspace with its virtually continuous coverage by radar and navigational aids.

If the long odds which Johnson and others cite had any basis in fact, then it is highly improbable that any other



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aircraft could have gone off course as far 007 either before or since. There are at least two other aircraft which have gone off course even farther in recent times, one a 707 which went 600-700 miles off course over the North Atlantic in the middle '70s, and another which went off course 500 miles in September 1984. Following the second incident, an official of the International Federation of Airline Pilots Associations noted that 55 aircraft had gone off course over the North Atlantic in just the previous year. No statistics are even available for the North Pacific because of the lack of radar coverage, but knowledgeable officials assume that at least as many occur deviations there. This demonstrates the fallacy of asserting that an aircraft deviation (or a Three Mile Island accident) cannot occur because of some probability analysis; it is simply not possible to assess the probability of such one-time events occurring.

It is this erroneous reasoning, nonetheless, which is the basis for Johnson's conclusion that 007's deviation must have been intentional: error that grievous cannot be accidental. Applying this same criterion to Johnson's book one must ask whether such an incredible tangle of misleading assertions, internal contradictions, and downright untruths could have been written "accidentally." Only Johnson knows for sure. What there can be no doubt about, however, is that Johnson has manipulated and distorted the evidence beyond recognition in support of his anti-Reagan screed.

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